

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire – Information for Passengers



April 2016

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire

Information for Passengers



Introduction

Cambridge City Council is responsible for licensing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles and their Drivers in Cambridge and we are committed to providing a professional, safe and accessible service. The key priority for Cambridge City Council is to protect the public and to ensure that:

- Licensed vehicles in the district are safe, comfortable and properly insured
- Licensed drivers are 'fit and proper' to hold a licence

Cambridge City Council encourages passengers to be "IPSA":

- Informed
- Prepared
- Safe
- Aware

In preparing these guidance notes, the Council supports passengers in their plans to get home safely and to take a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle they can trust.

Types of Licence

Cambridge City Council licenses different types of driver and vehicle:

- Hackney Carriage Vehicle
- Private Hire Vehicle
- Hackney Carriage Driver
- Private Hire Driver
- Dual Driver

It is important that you know the difference between the vehicles:

Hackney Carriage Vehicles

- Can be flagged down (hailed) in the street, at an authorised rank or can be pre-booked (there is no legal requirement for an advanced booking)
- Have a 'Cambridge Licensed Taxi' yellow roof sign on the top of the vehicle
- Have a crest on the side of the vehicle bearing the words 'Cambridge Hackney Carriage'
- Display a pale blue identification plate on the rear of the vehicle
- Have a calibrated meter to calculate the fare

Private Hire Vehicles

- Can only be pre-booked via a licensed Private Hire Operator (the vehicle is not insured to carry you unless it is pre-booked)
- Does not have a taxi roof sign or crests
- Display pale green front and rear identification plates and must bear a company door sign stating 'Private Hire – Pre-booked Only'.

Drivers

- Must wear or display in the vehicle their Driver ID Badge which details their name, their licence number and the expiry date of their driver licence
- Have been fully vetted, including the completion of an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check, to ensure that they are 'fit and proper' to hold a licence; prior to a licence being granted

Please note that there are a number of Private Hire Vehicles that operate in the City which are licensed by other local authorities, in particular South Cambridgeshire District Council. These vehicles can be identified by their yellow plates. Any concerns or issues about these vehicles should be addressed directly to South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Fares and Charges

Hackney Carriages

Hackney Carriage fares are set by the Council and a fare chart should be displayed clearly in each licensed Hackney Carriage Vehicle. Fares are based upon three elements:

- The time of day
- The time taken to complete the journey
- The length of the journey

All vehicles are fitted with a calibrated meter which should not start until all passengers and their belongings are safely in the vehicle.

Hackney Carriage Vehicles must set the meter for journeys within the City Boundary and there is a £3 extra charge for 5 or more passengers which the driver may add to total fare.

If a journey is going beyond the City Boundary, a passenger can obtain a quote from the driver before the commencement of the journey. However, you are within your rights not to accept the quote from the first taxi in the rank.

It is important that you agree the method of charging before you set off on your journey so that you and the driver are both clear (meter or a quoted price).

Private Hire Vehicles

Fares that are charged by Private Hire Vehicles are not controlled by the Council, however the Private Hire Operators that use licensed vehicles fitted with a fare meter must provide the Council with a current table of fares.

Taxi Ranks

Cambridge City provides Hackney Carriage Stands or 'Taxi Ranks' where taxis may wait for customers. The ranks are provided where a demand has been identified such as outside large establishments or at locations where the public or trade have suggested they would be beneficial.

Ranks can be operational for 24 hours or part time (such as evening only).

Designated taxi ranks may be used by any Hackney Carriage Vehicle, but may not be used by Private Hire Vehicles.

List of Ranks

Location	Control	Hours of Operation	Approximate No. of spaces*
Bridge Street	Traffic Regulation Order	All days 7pm-6am	2
Drummer Street	Traffic Regulation Order	All days all hours	9
Market Hill**	Byelaw	All days all hours**	5
Parkside	Traffic Regulation Order	All days all hours	5
St Andrew's Street near Hobson Street	Byelaw	All days all hours	7
Sidney Street ** near Sussex Street	Traffic Regulation Order	All days 7pm-7am	2
Sidney Street near Petty Cury	Traffic Regulation Order	All days 7pm-6am	6
St Andrew's Street near Park Terrace	Traffic Regulation Order	All days 7pm-7am	6
Station Road	Traffic Regulation Order /Byelaw	All days all hours	4
Station Road	Traffic Regulation Order /Byelaw	All days all hours	7

* Approximate number of spaces based on bay length

** Rank only accessible outside of pedestrian zone hours.

Passengers

Some saloon vehicles can carry a maximum of four passengers, although Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV's) can take more.

The rear licence plate on the vehicle will state how many passengers that particular Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle is licensed to carry.

Accessibility

The majority of Hackney Carriage Vehicles are able to transport wheelchair users or passengers with limited mobility or other support needs.

Saloon vehicles do not have the capability to carry a wheelchair user in the wheelchair but they are still able to carry passengers with a wide range of assistance needs and wheelchair users who are able to transfer independently.

The Equality Act 2010 places certain duties on drivers of wheelchair accessible Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles. These duties are:

- To carry the passenger while in the wheelchair, and;
- Not to make any charge for doing so.
- Should the passenger choose to sit in a passenger seat, to carry their wheelchair,
- To take such necessary steps to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort, and;
- To give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonably required.

Unless the driver has been granted an exemption certificate from the City Council, they must not refuse to carry wheelchair users. More and more private hire operators have wheelchair accessible vehicles within their fleet but do ask at the time of making your booking. There are many different vehicles which suit individual needs and you can speak directly to the operator to try and facilitate any special access requirements which you may have.

Assistance Dogs

The Equality Act 2010 places the following duty on drivers of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers:

- To carry the passenger's (guide, hearing or assistance) dog, allowing it to remain with the passenger and not make any additional charge for doing so.

It is an offence for the driver of a Hackney Carriage to fail to carry an assistance dog and allow it to remain with the passenger or to make any additional charge for doing so.

It is an offence for the Operator of a Private Hire vehicle to fail or refuse to accept a booking for a passenger with an assistance dog. The Operator also commits an offence if they make an additional charge for carrying an assistance dog.

It is an offence for the driver of a Private Hire vehicle to fail or refuse to carry out a booking accepted by the Private Hire Operator for a passenger with an assistance dog.

Exemptions

In some circumstances a driver of a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle may be unable to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for medical reasons, short or long term. The Act allows licensing authorities to grant exemption to drivers from the duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs if they are satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, on medical grounds or because the driver's physical condition makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to comply with the duties.

The Act also allows licensing authorities to grant exemption to drivers from the duties to transport assistance dogs if they are satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, on medical grounds.

If an exemption certificate has been issued by the Council, the certificate must be displayed within the vehicle.

Luggage

There are no exemptions, medical or otherwise, for a Hackney Carriage, Private Hire or Dual Driver in respect of conveying a reasonable quantity of luggage or providing reasonable assistance in the loading and unloading of luggage.

Complaints

If you are unfortunate enough to have cause for complaint about a Cambridge City licence holder; you may choose to take up your complaint with the driver or private hire operator directly.

Alternatively you can take note of the driver's name and badge number, the vehicle plate number and/ or the vehicle registration number and contact the Licensing & Enforcement Team with the details of your complaint (licensing@cambridge.gov.uk).

Some complaints are about poor customer service and we encourage Taxi Associations and Private Hire Operators to investigate and resolve the problem, which they do on a large number of occasions.

The Licensing & Enforcement team operates under Licensing Law and can investigate complaints by passengers concerning drivers, vehicles and operators.

What is the Council's role?

We record all complaints concerning licensed drivers, vehicles and operators, except where the complainants are unwilling to provide their contact details. It is important that if you make a complaint that you provide as much detail as possible.

What do I need to do?

Tell us what happened and when. We will need you to be able to identify the driver and/or vehicle (e.g. the plate number, badge number or vehicle registration number). If you cannot provide these details then we will be unable to follow the matter up.

You will also need to provide your name, address and, if you would rather be contacted by telephone than by email, your telephone number.

What happens next?

In cases of misconduct the complainant may be required to make a witness statement and will be advised that formal disciplinary action may depend on them supporting their statement in person at a disciplinary hearing.

If there are two conflicting accounts of an incident and no independent witnesses then our powers are limited. In such cases, the driver may only be given words of advice on the standard of driving and behaviour expected from licensed drivers.

A record of the complaint will be retained on the driver's record and the matter will again be considered if similar complaints are received in the future that suggest that there is a pattern to the licence holder's behaviour. A number of minor complaints in a short space of time or a similar incident occurring could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

If it is alleged that criminal offences under taxi or private hire legislation have been committed, the council will investigate the offence. A statement will usually be taken from the complainant and other relevant evidence gathered prior to the licence holder being interviewed under caution. If there is sufficient evidence to instigate legal proceedings, the complainant may be called as a witness to give evidence in court in support of the council's case.

If the council cannot enforce the offence, the complainant as detailed above will be advised to refer the matter to the police or the relevant enforcement agency. In such cases disciplinary action will usually be postponed until the police have completed their investigation and closed the incident. This may mean waiting to see if the licence holder is convicted of the offence but, if the matter is of such a serious nature that it requires the council to take interim steps, the licence may be suspended pending the completion of the police investigation.

General

If you have already attempted to resolve the issue, without success, please contact us and we will, if necessary, carry out further investigations and refer the matter to other appropriate bodies as applicable.

We are committed to providing the City with a top quality Hackney Carriage and Private Hire service for its residents and visitors alike. We welcome feedback in any form, be it a compliment, a complaint or a comment and we encourage you to contact us if you have any queries or concerns.

Please be advised that the Licensing and Enforcement Team does not have the power to enforce:

- **Parking Infringements** (e.g. parking on double yellow lines or double parking or other highway parking issues). For parking infringements please contact Cambridgeshire County Council at info@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
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- **Obstruction** (e.g. causing obstruction on the public highway including parking too near road junctions). For obstruction infringements please contact Cambridgeshire Constabulary in the first instance on 101, the non-emergency number. (If the matter is an emergency then call 999)
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- **Traffic offences** (e.g. using hand-held mobile phone while driving, road rage, careless or dangerous driving). For traffic offences please contact Cambridgeshire Constabulary in the first instance on 101, the non-emergency number. (If the matter is an emergency then call 999)
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- **Criminal offences** (e.g. assault, threats, harassment, theft of mobile phone, indecency). For criminal offences please contact Cambridgeshire Constabulary in the first instance on 101, the non-emergency number. (If the matter is an emergency then call 999)
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- **Running a vehicle engine and sounding a vehicle horn when stationary** can be offences. These offences are infringements under Regulations 98 & 99 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. For infringements of these regulations please contact Cambridgeshire Constabulary in the first instance on 101, the non-emergency number. (If the matter is an emergency then call 999)
- **Vehicles licensed by another local authority** (e.g. South Cambridgeshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council) Contact the relevant local authority which has licensed these vehicles:

South Cambridgeshire District Council: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/taxi-licences>

East Cambridgeshire District Council: <http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/licensing/taxi-private-hire-licences>

Huntingdonshire District Council: <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/licensing/taxis-private-hire/>